Fig. 77*a* shows a Yakut man and woman transporting a Yakut plow on an ox-drawn sledge. The method of plowing may be seen in Fig. 77*b*. A model of an ox sledge is illustrated in Fig. 78. Even in summer it is much easier to transport freight on sledges where there are no roads.

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Transportation

Outside the City of Yakutsk, the use of the wheeled cart, adopted from the Russians, is very limited throughout the Province. Roads suitable for wheeled transport are rare. They extend only 1036 kilometers: from Yakutsk to Viliuisk (600 km.) and from Viliuisk to Suntar (436 km.). I myself had the opportunity to use a wheeled cart when traveling from Yakutsk about sixty miles to the east to the Churupcha settlement.

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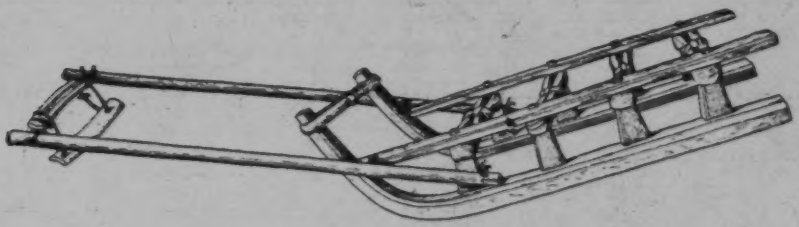

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Fig. 78 (70-8832). Model of an Ox Sledge.

All the other roads are swampy and in summer were passable only on horseback; even this means of transportation is very difficult, particularly in the northern districts. In winter sledges are everywhere drawn by horses; in the northern districts reindeer and dogs are also used. Many Tungus, Lamut, and Yukaghir use the reindeer for riding, particularly in the mountainous districts between the great rivers. In summer small steamers ply the Lena and Viliui rivers. On the Yana, Indighirka, and Kolyma rivers and their tributaries large boats are used for carrying freight as well as for passengers. During the winter freight carried on pack-horses or by reindeer sledges from the shores of the Okhotsk Sea (Okhotsk, Yamsk, Ayan or Ola) over the mountains to the upper course of the Kolyma River, is floated down on pontoon-like rafts consisting of two large boats covered with a bridge. Such rafts are provided with a rudder and are propelled with long poles. As they cannot be poled up the river they are sold to the inhabitants of Nishne Kolymsk, who make boats of different sizes from them. Recently I learned that a steamer coming through Bering Strait now visits Nishne Kolymsk every summer, bringing flour and other commodities for sale or exchange for furs.

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55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

towards the reindeer in complete silence, and in summer they wore a protective gray coat the color of the stony tundra. Both in summer and autumn, until the first snow fell, the Dolgans used to trail wild reindeer with hunting dogs. They used poisoned bullets, and probably poisoned arrows as well in the past. As the poison they used rancid reindeer fat. The Dolgans living in the forest-tundra had wide skis of the Tungus type, but they could not use them in the tundra on account of the drifts.

Hunting wild reindeer was only of importance as a source of meat and skin for the Dolgans' own semisubsistence economy.

For catching geese they set traps or arranged noose-type snares by the nests, and also drove moulting geese into nets set up in advance or harried them with dogs and then killed them with sticks. Ducks were trapped with special nets stretched across lakes. Partridges were also caught this way, though only in winter. Sometimes a live female partridge was tied to the net as bait.

Polar-fox hunting was of quite considerable economic importance and produced the principal commercial yield. The animals were mainly caught with traps and snares. As it seized hold of the bait, the fox pulled away a stick and released a log which fell onto it. The principle of this trap was borrowed from the Russians; up to that time they had only set self-firing bows on stakes driven into the ground to catch the animals.

The commonest type of fishing tackle both in summer and winter under the ice was an upright net 6–30 m long. The nets were made of threads or horsehair brought from Yakutya. In the Noril'sk Rayon the nets were used in the autumn in mountain rivers. The draught animal employed for this purpose was the reindeer and the ropes from the net were attached to its saddle. Other types of nets were used to a very limited degree. Seines were also commonly used for sterlet, burbot, pike and grayling and trout with hooks prefabricated from bent 10-cm nails. Burbot was also caught with special bone points instead of hooks.

For traveling by water, mainly for fishing purposes, there were tree-trunk canoes brought by the merchants from the Yenisey, or bought from the Yakuts. There were few boats; it was only on the rivers Pyasina and Khatanga that they were used.

The Dolgans subsisted mainly on meat and fish. These were boiled or dried and the fish was also eaten in the raw, frozen and unfrozen forms. Fish was also kept in pits where it was pickled. Dead geese were kept buried in the ground. Certain roots were also eaten; they were dug up with reindeer horns or special wooden trowels.

The old type of nomadic dwelling among the Dolgans was the conical Tungus-type tent covered with thin panels of suede (in the summer) and deerhide (in the winter). In the old days the Dolgans, like the Evenks, built huts of the Yakut type, but without the windows, benches and hearth.

With the advent of the Russians the huts were gradually ousted by sled-tents or baloks. These are little huts on runners. The framework consists of wooden struts tightly covered with bright-colored calico, and on top, to keep it warm, there is a layer of deerskin and a canvas cover to guard against damp. In this kind of dwelling there are two windows with glass, an iron stove, bunks, a table, and sometimes even chairs. Whereas the erection of a pole tent required a great deal of labor during the cold winters, this type of tent can simply be pulled along the ground to a new site. These tents were borrowed in the last century from Russian merchants who traveled in them through the tundra.

Among other structures we should point out storehouses standing on high piles for keeping winter clothing and utensils.